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Report of the Secretary General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2388 (2017)

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2388 (2017), the Security Council reiterated its deep concern that, despite its condemnation of acts of trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict, such acts continued to occur. The Council also expressed grave concern over the high number of women and children subjected to trafficking in areas affected by armed conflict and the abduction of children in conflict situations. In the resolution, the Council called upon Member States to, among other things, improve their implementation of applicable legal obligations to criminalize, prevent and otherwise combat trafficking in persons and to step up their efforts to investigate, disrupt and dismantle networks engaging in trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict. The Council also called on Member States to combat related crimes, such as money-laundering, corruption, the smuggling of migrants and other forms of organized crime and encouraged relevant United Nations agencies and entities to develop, in accordance with their mandates, their capability to assess and respond to situations of trafficking in persons in armed conflict.

2. The present report follows up on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2388 (2017) and on the progress made in the past 12 months. It is based on information provided by Member States, United Nations entities and relevant international and regional bodies.

II. Recent developments concerning trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict

3. Since the debate at the Security Council on trafficking in persons that was held on 21 November 2017, the severity of human trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as the nexus between terrorism and trafficking in persons, has been examined on a number of occasions by the Council. The issue was discussed during several Security Council debates, including the debate on the maintenance of international peace and security held on 28 November 2017 (see S/PV.8114) and the debate on children and armed conflict held on 9 July 2018 (see S/PV.8305). I have also recently reported on instances of conflict-related sexual violence that encompass trafficking in persons when committed in situations of conflict for the purpose of sexual violence or exploitation (see S/2018/250).

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Overview and state of play of trafficking acts carried out by armed groups

4. Trafficking in persons continues to be increasingly identified as a feature of armed conflict. The cycles of violence that animate conflict often enable abuse, exploitation and crime to thrive, providing the base conditions under which trafficking in persons can flourish. Instances of forced marriage, sexual slavery and forced prostitution, which have long been a feature of many conflict situations, may at the same time qualify as forms of trafficking in persons.

5. The severe acts of trafficking in persons occurring in Libya against migrants, discussed by the Security Council on 28 November 2017, raised public awareness of the risks facing people on the move. In my report on making migration work for all (A/72/643), I underlined the risks and vulnerability of persons fleeing conflicts or on the move, especially those travelling through territories marked by insecurity and fragility. Political fragmentation and the proliferation of arms and armed groups in Libya have allowed trafficking networks to thrive and perpetrate sexual violence against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (see S/2018/250). In my report of 12 February 2018 (S/2018/140), I encouraged the Libyan authorities to spare no effort to identify and prosecute those responsible for such heinous crimes, and called on all actors to cooperate with and support the efforts of the Libyan authorities to bring perpetrators to justice.

6. A task force on the situation of stranded migrants in Libya was formally launched in December 2017 by the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations, who agreed to coordinate positions to promote African, European and international initiatives aimed at reducing demand, disrupting the supply chain and bringing migrant smugglers and human traffickers to justice. As at August 2018, the task force had facilitated 26,000 voluntary humanitarian returns through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the evacuation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of 1,600 persons in need of international protection.

7. Boko Haram continues to abduct young girls for exploitative purposes.[1] In addition, the growing use of young women and girls as suicide bombers has created an atmosphere of suspicion towards them and made them targets of harassment, stigmatization and arbitrary arrest by security forces, raising concerns about the reintegration of surrendered Boko Haram fighters (see S/2018/521).

8. Similar patterns have also been detected in the Horn of Africa. Al-Shabaab, for instance, abducted over 1,600 children from January to December 2017, which points to a sustained reliance on children for combat and support duties (see A/72/865–S/2018/465). Women and girls are also reportedly trafficked by Al-Shabaab from the coastal regions of Kenya to Somalia, where they are forced into sexual slavery, after being deceived by false promises of work abroad. Some of those women were reportedly held as sex slaves, while others were forced to become the "wives" of insurgents (see S/2018/250).

9. The activities of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Daesh) also continue to raise grave concern, despite its decline on the ground. Thousands of Iraqi Yazidi women and girls, captured since August 2014, continued in 2018 to be trafficked into and across the Syrian Arab Republic — some forcibly transferred — where they have been used as sex slaves as part of the ongoing campaign of ISIL of targeting members of minority groups. In this context, I particularly welcome the award of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize to Nadia Murad, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Goodwill Ambassador for the

[1] See Security Council press statement of 2 March 2018. Available at www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13233.doc.htm.

Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, herself a member of the Yazidi community and survivor of human trafficking in conflict situations.

10. The Security Council, in its resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017), underscored that certain acts or offences associated with trafficking in the context of armed conflict might constitute war crimes. At the same time, effective prosecution of offenders requires the collection of solid and reliable evidence during the investigation, which presents serious challenges in areas where armed and terrorist groups operate. In order to respond, at least in part, to such situations and pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), I appointed in May 2018 a Special Adviser and head of an investigative team to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence in Iraq of acts committed by this terrorist group that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. I call upon all States to fully support and cooperate with the investigative team. I also welcome the ongoing work of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic.

11. In Myanmar, reports have indicated that Rohingya women and girls who fled violence from Rakhine State to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, confront risks of trafficking, in addition to forced marriage and sexual exploitation. Women and girls in the Kachin and northern Shan states of Myanmar also face serious risks of trafficking and sexual slavery (see S/2018/250). According to testimonial evidence collected by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, rape and other forms of sexual violence were perpetrated on a massive scale and formed part of a deliberate strategy to intimidate, terrorize or punish a civilian population (see A/HRC/39/64).

Linkages between trafficking and grave violations against children affected by armed conflict

12. Armed conflict has an impact on the lives of children and makes them vulnerable to trafficking in persons and other forms of exploitation. Trafficking in persons is closely linked to the six grave violations affecting children in situations of armed conflict. In this context, the recruitment and use of children nearly always constitutes trafficking, as the two required elements of the offence of trafficking in persons that affect children, namely the action (recruitment) and purpose (exploitation), are intrinsic elements of this grave violation. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are also clearly linked to trafficking, as armed groups often traffic children for sexual purposes and sometimes to financially sustain their activities. Abduction can also amount to trafficking when it occurs for exploitative purposes, as is often the case in conflict situations. The Security Council, in its resolution 2427 (2018), recognized the links between abductions, recruitment and trafficking in persons and encouraged relevant parts of the United Nations System, within their respective mandates, to work to address this issue.

13. While these grave violations have a clear and direct link to trafficking in persons, other grave violations are linked in less intuitive ways. For example, attacks on schools and hospitals can be used to abduct children, but these violations can also make children more vulnerable to additional abuses and violations. Destroying schools and hospitals and preventing educational opportunities leaves children more vulnerable to trafficking, as they will be forced to seek education, care or even employment elsewhere. Moreover, the denial of humanitarian access may also leave children more vulnerable to trafficking as they are forced to find ways to leave areas where insufficient aid is getting through.

14. In the past 12 months, I have submitted to the Security Council country-specific reports on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2018/502), Mali (S/2018/136) and Myanmar (S/2017/1099), all of which addressed acts closely linked to human trafficking, such as the abduction of children.

15. In my report on children and armed conflict of May 2018 (A/72/865–S/2018/465), I noted that the United Nations continued to document the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, including three verified cases of boys recruited by ISIL in and around Tripoli for trafficking into the Syrian Arab Republic.[2] In its 2018 report (S/2018/594), the Panel of Experts on Yemen reported investigations of individuals and networks engaging in child recruitment and the use of children in conflict. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, armed groups and community defence groups engaged in the forced recruitment and use of children, exposing them to other grave violations, including sexual violence. At least 56 per cent of the newly recruited girls reported rape, sexual slavery or forced marriage by armed groups (see S/2018/502).

Arrest and detention of persons released from the captivity of armed groups

16. Identification of victims of trafficking is essential to ensure that they receive protection and assistance in accordance with applicable international legal instruments and domestic legislation. Routinely assessing the individual situation of persons, including children, released from the captivity of armed and terrorist groups facilitates an active determination of whether they have been trafficked. Such assessments also facilitate, in line with domestic legislation, non-prosecution or punishment of victims of trafficking for unlawful activities they may have committed as a direct result of having been subjected to trafficking.

17. Recent country-specific reports on children and armed conflict note instances of children being arrested and detained for their alleged association with armed groups. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at least 95 children were detained on such grounds for periods ranging between 30 days and one year. Children reported poor detention conditions and, in some cases, inhumane treatment, including torture (see S/2018/502). In Mali, 72 boys who were arrested and detained by the Government for their alleged association with armed groups were released, but other children remain in custody (see S/2018/136).

18. Women and children formerly associated with violent extremist groups are often seen by societies as "affiliates" rather than victims, and, in some cases, actions by the authorities have reinforced those views. Local-level officials in Iraq have reportedly designated children as "ISIL terrorists" on their birth certificates. Women and girls forcibly married to ISIL fighters often face a presumption of "guilt by association". In some cases, women and girls have been held arbitrarily, without judicial review following their release from ISIL captivity (see (S/2018/250). As at July 2018, over 1,300 children were reportedly being held by parties in the north-eastern part of the Syrian Arab Republic. Of those reported cases, the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), could verify only seven cases since the beginning of 2018, owing to a lack of access (see A/73/278 and S/PV.8320).

[2] In the Syrian Arab Republic itself, from January to December 2017, the United Nations verified 24 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence (23 girls and 1 boy). Cases included gang rape, forced marriage to armed group fighters, trafficking and sexual enslavement. Of the 24 cases, 18 were attributed to ISIL, 4 to Government forces and 2 to Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. I have expressed concern over reports of trafficking of children in Libya.

Other developments

19. In the follow-up to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,[3] Member States negotiated the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The non-binding but intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome was published on 13 July 2018.[4] In that document, Member States commit to take legislative or other measures to prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration. I welcome this commitment, which is essential to addressing the risks of human rights violations and abuse faced by refugees and migrants, especially female migrants and separated and/or unaccompanied children.

20. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, has stressed how Somali and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict have been kidnapped or lured from refugee camps or while travelling, sold and subsequently held captive in Libya or in the Sinai desert for the purpose of exploitation through extortion (see A/HRC/38/45). She has also highlighted the challenges faced by refugees and migrants exploited in the course of their journeys, including a reluctance to self-report exploitation and the de-prioritization of identification efforts by relevant stakeholders.

21. The Security Council requested me to ensure that the thematic paper on countering trafficking in persons in conflict situations, prepared by UNODC, was disseminated within the United Nations system. On 17 October 2018, my office disseminated the thematic paper to all missions, as well as to the funds, programmes and agencies operating in conflict-affected settings for which the thematic paper was most relevant. They were encouraged to use it as a basis for developing tools, good practices and guidance on addressing trafficking in persons within their respective mandates. I also welcome the study prepared by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate aimed at identifying and exploring the nexus between human trafficking, acts of terrorism and terrorism financing.

III. Measures reported by Member States

A. Ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol

22. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, together with its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, continues to offer a framework for States to reinforce international cooperation in criminal matters and facilitate the exchange of information relating to trafficking offences perpetrated by armed and terrorist groups. During the reporting period, the State of Palestine deposited its instrument of accession to the Protocol on 29 December 2017; the Protocol entered into force in the State of Palestine on 28 January 2018. As at 30 September 2018, there were 187 States parties to the Convention and 173 States parties to the Protocol. On 19 October 2018, at the most recent session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, held in Vienna, Member States agreed to establish a peer review mechanism to enhance the implementation of the Convention, including the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

[3] General Assembly resolution 71/1.

[4] www.un.org/pga/72/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2018/07/180713_Agreed-Outcome_Global-Compact-for-Migration.pdf.

23. In their contributions to the present report, a number of States noted that there was no armed conflict in their territories and that they had not identified victims of trafficking coming from conflict-affected areas or trafficked by terrorist or armed groups. Nevertheless, the measures these States presented in their inputs related to identifying and protecting victims of trafficking remain relevant to the overall purpose of the Convention and Protocol, which is to ensure that all victims of trafficking are identified and protected, and traffickers prosecuted and convicted. I encourage them to continue such efforts, as they clearly contribute to a more comprehensive response internationally.

24. The majority of Member States had adopted legislation criminalizing trafficking in persons, in line with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. Several States noted that their anti-trafficking laws, which covered various forms of exploitation, applied to trafficking in times of peace, as well as in times of conflict. Some States stressed that certain related conduct might be covered by provisions other than those specifically criminalizing trafficking in persons. That was the case, for instance, with regard to the recruitment of children by armed groups, which in some States had been established as a distinct criminal offence. Other States stressed that trafficking in persons constituted a violation of human rights and possibly also a war crime, a crime against humanity or even genocide.

25. One State questioned the competence of the Security Council to address trafficking in persons, arguing that trafficking fell within the purview of other United Nations bodies.

B. Implementation of applicable legal obligations to prevent, criminalize, investigate and prosecute trafficking in conflict situations

26. Many States highlighted the challenges associated with the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking in the context of armed conflict, and reported various measures that they had undertaken to address such challenges.

27. The utilization of officers with a specialization in investigating human trafficking and other complex crimes was highlighted as a key objective and good practice. Similarly, several States reported efforts to provide adequate training in combating trafficking in persons, in all its manifestations, to criminal justice actors and consular staff, including through specialized courses throughout their training curricula.

28. States continued to report successful initiatives to enhance information exchange and joint operations relating to trafficking cases. I welcome the setting up of a joint investigation team involving France, the Niger and Spain to fight against criminal networks linked to trafficking in persons, and invite other States to join or support similar initiatives. Other positive developments include the conduct of regionally coordinated investigations and the conclusion of memorandums of understanding and agreements between countries of origin, transit and destination of specific trafficking flows.

29. Measures targeting the capacity of international peacekeepers in active duty or when stationed in areas affected by armed conflict are particularly crucial in addressing trafficking in such areas. States reported the integration of specialized training on trafficking in persons, the criminal structures involved and their modi operandi as part of regular predeployment training. Another good practice that was noted concerned the issuance of guidelines for the identification and referral of trafficking victims to competent authorities, and for the utilization of these guidelines

by military police officers deployed on the ground and tasked with investigating offences committed by troops. I invite States to follow these approaches and continue to enhance the training of military and police personnel to provide them with skills to address human trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations.

30. Some States indicated that they had established jurisdiction over trafficking offences committed outside of their territory in accordance with article 15 of the Organized Crime Convention. I am pleased to note that other States reported the establishment of extraterritorial jurisdiction without a requirement of dual criminality. For instance, one State reported that its anti-trafficking law had an extraterritorial reach, which provided jurisdiction over its nationals, who might be prosecuted for trafficking offences committed abroad, including in areas affected by armed conflict. I invite Member States to consider these approaches, which facilitate international cooperation and curtail impunity.

31. Prevention of trafficking in persons is also key, especially considering that vulnerability increases in areas affected by conflict or hosting persons fleeing conflict. Joint efforts between government agencies and civil society organizations constitute a good method of sensitizing and raising awareness about human trafficking among internally displaced persons, as well as other persons involved. A State directly affected by internal armed conflict reported the establishment of a specialized State entity, which developed advocacy materials and organized specialized training for frontline officers assisting children in situations of armed conflict. I invite States to pursue such efforts and extend them to other settings and audiences, such as refugee camps and reception centres.

32. A number of States reported the establishment of national strategies and action plans. Many national action plans foresaw a comprehensive approach, encompassing the prevention of trafficking, the protection of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators. Some expressly referred to trafficking related to armed conflict. One State, for instance, reported that its national action plan included targets that specifically took into consideration the circumstances in areas affected by armed conflict, such as research on trafficking in zones of armed conflict and the development of specific prevention programmes, community educational activities and campaigns.

33. I welcome the development by several States of a multidimensional approach that includes the incorporation of information on the risks of trafficking in persons into school curricula and training programmes. National educational institutions have integrated information on this issue into class materials, as well as information on children who are vulnerable as a result of armed conflict, and held discussion sessions at all levels of education. I invite States to further continue these efforts and to consider integrating the topic of trafficking in persons into the teaching modules of educational institutions.

C. Improving the identification of victims or persons vulnerable to trafficking, including by enhancing the capacity of professionals interacting with persons forcibly displaced by armed conflict

34. Many States underlined early identification as a crucial measure for the provision of adequate protection to victims of trafficking, including victims in areas affected by conflicts or coming from such areas. Several States, especially those facing mixed migration flows as transit or destination countries, reported advancing significant efforts to that end.

35. Several States reported the development of inclusive identification regimes, which enhanced the capabilities of public and private professionals to detect and identify victims or persons vulnerable to trafficking as early as possible. The involvement of a broad range of professionals in the process for screening, identification and registration of refugees and migrants was particularly prevalent in hotspots, first reception centres, accommodation centres and shelters for asylum seekers and migrants. Those included asylum profes ˙onals, border guards, labour inspectors, health professionals (including mental health practitioners and paramedics) and the authorities of local administrations. Collaboration with civil society organizations in identification efforts has also been reported, notably in the setting up of mobile teams and in the development of international training programmes. I invite States to support such activities, which directly contribute to the development of early-screening frameworks critical to assisting, supporting and protecting victims in a timely manner.

36. States stressed that the involvement of a broader group of stakeholders was best accompanied by the development of specific training courses, booklets and guidelines. I welcome the fact that States have developed training courses addressing the identification of trafficking victims among foreign citizens and stateless persons and the need for trauma-informed interviewing techniques for vulnerable persons coming from conflict zones. One State reported the adoption of an inter-institutional training plan with a mandatory training requirement for all professionals at local, central and regional authorities. Other States had developed unified vulnerability assessments that were carried out by medical doctors and psychosocial professionals and produced booklets for migration and asylum authorities providing a comprehensive overview of trafficking, as well as standard operating procedures for the identification and referral of victims of trafficking, including specific provisions for unaccompanied minors. Some States also provided specialized assistance and shelters for victims of trafficking identified among refugees and reported rehabilitation programmes for victims in areas affected by conflict and camps for internally displaced persons, such as vocational training, in dedicated skill acquisition centres. I encourage States to adopt and support similar approaches that contribute to the identification of, and the provision of assistance and support to, trafficking victims.

37. Unaccompanied children forcibly displaced by armed conflict are particularly vulnerable to traffickers and to being recruited for combat. I am pleased to highlight that, in addition to criminalizing the forced recruitment of children in hostilities, many States have implemented specific activities to identify such children and rehabilitate them. With regard to the general protection of children, many States reported specific measures to identify vulnerable children, ensure their timely registration and consider their particular protection needs. It was noted that child victims of, or children vulnerable to, trafficking received protection and assistance from relevant government agencies in camps hosting internally displaced persons. States reported that national authorities arranged for the hosting of unaccompanied or separated children by foster families within the refugee community to reduce isolation. To ensure the protection of such children, other States provided for the appointment of guardians to cater for the needs of children and address whether they had been victims of trafficking, as well as for the placement of children in foster care

rather than in detention. The use of foster care is in line with recommendations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.[5]

38. Non-punishment of victims of trafficking for offences committed during their trafficking experience remains closely connected to their prompt identification, with a number of States noting that their domestic legislation provided for the exoneration of such persons from criminal liability in specific circumstances, including when persons were prosecuted for infringement of migration law. The principle of non-punishment is also particularly relevant when persons are released from the captivity of armed and terrorist groups.

D. Strengthening compliance with international standards on combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism

39. States continued their efforts to disrupt human trafficking activities through the conduct of financial investigations and the analysis of financial flows associated with human trafficking. At the same time, however, information on trafficking in persons to finance terrorism remains limited.

40. States have reported on the development of the capabilities of their financial intelligence units and their work in conducting financial investigations in cases of human trafficking. In some cases, these activities led to the recovery of several million dollars. Some States stressed in that regard the usefulness of innovative approaches, such as training offered by providers of financial transfer services to criminal justice practitioners. Collaboration between State authorities and money-service providers also proved useful by increasing awareness and detection of trafficking-related suspicious transaction reports. In addition, the fruitful collaboration between States, the Financial Action Task Force and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering led to the publication in July 2018 of an updated report on financial flows from human trafficking,[6] which focused on the laundering of proceeds of human trafficking. I invite States to take into account the risk indicators and the good practices mentioned in that report, which contribute to reinforcing the efficiency of systems in detecting and combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism from human trafficking.

41. Regarding cooperation and partnerships for the disruption of financial activity and flows associated with trafficking, States reported various regional and multi-stakeholder initiatives, involving experts from the financial sector, law enforcement officers and financial intelligence units. These initiatives are essential to analyse trends and share information on methods used to launder the proceeds of human trafficking. Some regional initiatives go beyond training and the sharing of information to include the carrying out of joint investigations to dismantle the financial business models of criminals.

[5] See UNHCR, Division of International Protection, "UNHCR's position regarding the detention of refugee and migrant children in the migration context" (January 2017), available at www.refworld.org/pdfid/5885c2434.pdf; and UNHCR, "Beyond detention: a global strategy to support governments to end the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees (2014–2019)", revision 1 (Geneva, 2014), available at www.unhcr.org/53aa929f6.pdf.

[6] Financial Action Task Force and Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, *Financial Flows from Human Trafficking* (Paris, 2018). Available at www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/content/images/Human-Trafficking-2018.pdf.

IV. Response of the United Nations system and other international and regional bodies

A. Support provided by United Nations entities to Member States to prevent and respond to trafficking in persons in conflict situations

42. The United Nations system has continued to provide support to Member States to prevent and respond to trafficking in persons in conflict situations. UNODC is working with national authorities to assist them in implementing the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. UNODC provides joint training sessions for investigators and prosecutors, integrating specific modules on trafficking in persons into the curricula of national training institutes, and develops standard operating procedures for investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons offences. These constitute good practices for increasing the capacities of criminal justice practitioners. Moreover, the assistance provided by UNODC to States in building databases to collect and analyse data on trafficking in persons also serves to help practitioners design effective policies to counter trafficking.

43. Support provided by UNODC to counter human trafficking in relation to armed conflict includes: technical round tables in territories where armed groups are operating, to strengthen capacities in the identification of and response to risk factors related to trafficking in persons; legislative assistance to incorporate the Trafficking in Persons Protocol into national law in countries affected by conflict; training workshops for criminal justice officers on the nexus between terrorism and human trafficking, with specific regard paid to the investigation and prosecution of cases of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict; provision of support for the deployment of liaison magistrates from origin countries to destination countries, to facilitate international judicial cooperation in criminal matters; capacity-building activities to address the phenomenon of children associated with terrorist groups; and a regional workshop for countries in East Africa on children on the move recruited and exploited by armed and terrorist groups.

44. Moreover, UNODC, in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, has developed a training module on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants for the in-mission training of police personnel deployed in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The module will be used to deliver a training-of-trainers session to MINUSMA police officers. The latter will subsequently roll out the training to their peers.

45. UNODC, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and in consultation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, is implementing capacity-building activities to integrate a gender lens into criminal justice responses to terrorism, including in cases of trafficking in persons to finance terrorism. Such cooperation efforts are commendable and I encourage all entities of the United Nations system to proactively explore opportunities to join forces in addressing manifestations of human trafficking in conflict settings.

46. The United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, managed by UNODC, selected 26 projects of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the receipt of $1.4 million in funding as part of its third grant cycle. At least half of these projects explicitly provide direct protection and assistance to victims trafficked in a situation of armed conflict or identified within mass refugee and migration movements. Humanitarian, legal and

financial aid to victims is provided to victims through existing channels of assistance, including NGO partners in various conflict-affected countries.

47. UNHCR is addressing trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict in the context of the sexual and gender-based violence and child protection areas of responsibility of the Global Protection Cluster. UNHCR focuses on developing targeted information campaigns in source countries of mixed migration flows, aimed at informing people about the dangers related to specific countries affected by conflict. UNHCR is also engaged in joint capacity development for improving the identification of and provision of assistance, protection and solutions to trafficking victims at the global, regional and field levels in areas affected by armed conflict.

48. IOM continues to work in partnership with Governments, other United Nations agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and development partners on all aspects of counter-trafficking responses.

49. IOM is strengthening referral mechanisms for trafficked persons, particularly for sexual and labour exploitation, through capacity-building activities, victim identification and direct assistance in countries hosting large numbers of persons displaced by conflict. To reinforce referral mechanisms and coordination, IOM has been strengthening the roles of and cooperation between development and humanitarian stakeholders through the establishment of inter-agency counter-trafficking working groups in conflict-affected settings. IOM also conducts information campaigns targeting conflict affected-populations to raise awareness of recruitment strategies deployed by traffickers and to link them with appropriate humanitarian services.

50. The Office of Counter-Terrorism, together with OHCHR and with the support of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, is developing a human rights training module for frontline border officials which addresses the identification of possible victims of trafficking.

51. The Office of Counter-Terrorism Working Group on Supporting and Highlighting Victims of Terrorism has developed a project on mapping the rehabilitation and reintegration needs of women and girls abducted by Boko Haram. The project maps the services and mechanisms established by government and United Nations entities to support such women and girls.

52. In January 2018, the Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect organized the fourth annual symposium on the role of religion and faith-based organizations in international affairs, which examined, among other topics, human rights issues linked to forced migration, including human trafficking and the related risk of atrocity crimes in conflict situations.

53. Given the close link between grave violations against children, such as abduction, recruitment and sexual violence, and trafficking in persons, measures taken to address the six grave violations affecting children in situations of armed conflict often have a preventative effect on trafficking of children. My Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict plays a key role in the drafting, signing and implementation of action plans for government forces and armed groups aimed at ending and preventing these grave violations. Action plans also serve as tools to address the trafficking of boys and girls for specific exploitative purposes. Fourteen action plans, six with government forces and eight with armed groups, were being implemented as at August 2018.

54. Throughout 2017, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and child protection partners supported the reintegration of over 12,000 children released from armed forces and groups, which often directly benefited child victims of trafficking. The formulation of standard operating procedures for the release and handover of

children associated with armed groups has proven to be an effective response tool to ensure that affected boys and girls are handed over to child protection actors and reunified with their families or caregivers. Two Governments have signed handover protocols for children since February 2017. Similarly, in August 2017, the Chief of Defence Forces of the Somali National Army issued a general command order to enhance the application of its 2014 standard operating procedures for the reception and handover of children separated from armed groups to the United Nations. My Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict has taken a lead role in advocating for the adoption and implementation of these agreements.

55. My Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict is also playing a lead role in ensuring commitments from Governments and armed groups to address conflict-related sexual violence by signing joint communiqués and frameworks of cooperation. The most recent framework of cooperation with Bangladesh, signed in September 2018, covers the prevention of trafficking in persons. Also, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict has been supporting the Government of Iraq in its effort to address crimes of sexual violence committed by ISIL, including those associated with human trafficking.

56. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in her latest report to the General Assembly (A/73/171), addresses the gender dimension of human trafficking in conflict and post-conflict settings. The report focuses on the protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and on the prevention of trafficking of women and girls in the aftermath of conflicts through the participation and empowerment of women. The report further explains that vulnerabilities deriving from conflicts are highly gendered, thus requiring the integration of a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to trafficking in persons into all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda.

57. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, in her 2018 reports on domestic servitude of migrant women and girls and on the gender dimensions of contemporary forms of slavery, discussed armed conflict among the risk factors that can lead to situations of vulnerability and trafficking in persons.

58. In addition to the support provided by entities of the United Nations system, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is also supporting its participating States that have large migratory groups from conflict and post-conflict areas. Through its project on combating human trafficking along migration routes, OSCE assisted States in enhancing criminal justice responses and prosecution of human traffickers operating along migration routes, and in better equipping frontline operators to identify and protect potential victims. In addition, since 2017, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) has carried out initiatives to develop law enforcement capacity, information sharing and identification of trafficking victims to counter the trafficking of members of vulnerable communities, including in the context of conflict, along the Sahel migration route and in North Africa.

B. Efforts to increase knowledge on financial flows associated with trafficking in persons, including those which finance terrorism

59. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, within the framework of its assessment visits conducted on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, raised awareness of human trafficking as both a tactic of terrorism and a means of raising funds for terrorist purposes.

60. The Directorate is developing a study aimed at further exploring the nexus between human trafficking, terrorism and the financing of terrorism. Preliminary information gathered by the Directorate thus far indicates that only a few States have been able to provide concrete instances pertaining to this nexus. The study will also reflect how other factors, notably armed conflict situations, forced displacements and irregular migration flows, have an impact on vulnerability to trafficking in persons.

61. As noted above, the Financial Action Task Force and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering issued a typology report on financial flows from human trafficking, which was adopted by the Task Force in June 2018. The report provides, inter alia, an overview of recent developments in the nature and scope of financial flows associated with human trafficking, including proceeds contributing to terrorist organizations and their activities.

62. The United Nations University and two Member States have developed a global, multi-stakeholder financial sector commission[7] to accelerate the financial sector's engagement in the fight against human trafficking, including by tackling drivers of human trafficking related to countering the financing of terrorism.

C. Integration of trafficking in persons into the work of sanctions Committees

63. The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team continued to include the issue of trafficking in persons in its discussions with Member States. In its twenty-first report to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities (S/2018/14/Rev.1), the Monitoring Team noted the patterns of human trafficking in Libya and the fact that ISIL in Libya continued to "tax" networks involved in human trafficking. In its twenty-second report to the Committee (S/2018/705), the Monitoring Team noted that it had received limited information from Member States on linkages between human trafficking and terrorist financing. In a bid to facilitate the future systematic collection of data on these issues, the Monitoring Team has encouraged its interlocutors to be alert to the opportunity to acquire such information presented by foreign terrorist fighters leaving conflict zones and entering the jurisdiction of Member States. Accordingly, I encourage Member States to provide the Monitoring Team with information that could help identify persons and entities involved in terrorist financing through trafficking in persons.

64. Relevant sanctions committees have integrated the issue of human trafficking into the implementation of sanctions measures. On 7 June 2018, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya designated six individuals as subject to sanctions measures as a result of their involvement in transnational trafficking networks in Libya. In addition, relevant sanctions committees have also considered the findings and recommendations of expert groups concerning human trafficking. Those have included, among others, the report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan (S/2017/1125), the report of the Panel of Experts on Libya concerning trafficking in Libya and the surrounding region (S/2018/812) and the report of the Panel of Experts on Mali (S/2018/581), which was established in September 2017 and explicitly mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2374 (2017) to track activities related to trafficking in persons.

65. Since 2015, the Department of Political Affairs has held an annual workshop on investigative interview techniques for groups and panels of experts, including

[7] See www.financialsectorcommission.org.

humanitarian experts. In addition, during the annual inter-panel workshop held in December 2017, the Department introduced a module on women, peace and security and on sexual violence in conflict. Moreover, the Department has developed a training course to strengthen its own understanding of the nexus between conflict and transnational organized crime, including human trafficking networks.

D. Efforts to enhance transparency in the procurement and supply chains of the United Nations system organizations

66. The United Nations Supplier Code of Conduct and the United Nations General Conditions of Contract clearly articulate that any supplier providing products or services to the United Nations is expected to adhere to the values of the Charter of the United Nations and to the International Labour Standards, and that contractors shall take all appropriate measures to prevent sexual exploitation or abuse by its employees or any other person they have engaged and prohibit forced or compulsory labour in all its forms. The text in the Supplier Code of Conduct on measures addressing human trafficking will be further explored within the Procurement Network of the High-level Committee on Management.

E. Improving data collection, analysis and research

67. UNODC has pursued its work on research and analysis related to trafficking in conflict situations. In partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNODC has interviewed police and justice experts from peacekeeping operations, focusing on the experiences and perceptions of the experts to identify the forms of exploitation, the profiles of victims and modi operandi. Cases from the international criminal tribunals have also been examined to identify how forced marriage, sexual slavery and recruitment of children have occurred in armed conflict, which may include aspects of trafficking in persons. The result of the research will be presented in the 2018 UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, which will be released in December 2018.

68. In the area of data collection and research, IOM is collecting baseline data on human trafficking and migrant exploitation, abuse and vulnerability in situations of crisis, displacement and large-scale migration. IOM continued using the Displacement Tracking Matrix to produce baseline data to inform responses aimed at countering trafficking in complex crisis situations and large-scale, cross-border migration flows.

69. The Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict helped to ensure that information collected from areas of conflict through the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence encompasses trafficking in persons, as per resolution 2388 (2017). This enabled me to address trafficking in persons in my annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, when relevant.

70. In June 2017, the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings launched a research project to study the links between human trafficking and terrorism by collecting and analysing cases of forced and deceptive recruitment, and the transfer and harbouring of adults and children for the purpose of exploitation. The research examines the vulnerability factors that are exploited by terrorist groups in order to lure individuals into conflict areas, and is aimed at refining our understanding of how persons are coerced, deceived, threatened or kidnapped into terrorist networks.

71. United Nations University has launched an online knowledge platform (Delta 8.7) that brings together data, evidence and analysis related to target 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The platform includes the latest research on conflict situations, organized crime and migration, and their connection to human trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

F. Efforts to develop coordinated responses to trafficking in persons in conflict situations

72. I am pleased to report that United Nations entities and international and regional organizations have stepped up their coordination efforts within the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. Since November 2017, four entities with important mandates in conflict-related areas, namely the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, joined the Group, which currently consists of 22 members and 1 partner organization. On 2 May 2018, members of the Group met for the first time at the principals level and took important strategic decisions to advance its work, including to develop guidance materials on anti-trafficking responses, increase joint advocacy efforts and establish an administrative secretariat for the Group, led by UNODC. The Group remains the main United Nations inter-agency mechanism to address human trafficking.

73. The thematic paper on countering trafficking in persons in conflict situations, prepared by UNODC following consultations with a broad range of United Nations entities, is a tool to foster more consistent and coordinated responses to human trafficking by the United Nations system. Through contributing to a common and better understanding of human trafficking in the context of conflict, it is aimed at supporting collaborative efforts to prevent and counter conflict-related human trafficking.

74. The task team on anti-trafficking in humanitarian action of the Global Protection Cluster continued to develop a common position on interventions to counter trafficking as part of humanitarian responses and to provide recommendations and guidance on how best to integrate such interventions systematically into Cluster mechanisms. Between October 2017 and June 2018, the task team carried out a stocktaking exercise in the humanitarian response mechanisms on trafficking in persons. Through semi-structured interviews with Protection Cluster Coordinators and other actors in 29 humanitarian settings, the task team assessed if and how human trafficking was being addressed by Cluster coordination mechanisms, identified gaps and recurring challenges and explored opportunities related to addressing human trafficking in the humanitarian response. The report of this exercise was released in September 2018.[8]

V. Observations and recommendations

75. During the reporting period, the international community has sustained and enhanced its efforts to respond to trafficking in persons in conflict situations. I particularly welcome the efforts undertaken by States and other stakeholders to better identify, among persons affected by conflict, those who have been trafficked, or who are at risk of being trafficked. I urge Member States to consider replicating the good

[8] Available at www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/anti-trafficking-in-humanitarian-responses.pdf.

practices mentioned in the present report, such as the competences conferred to a wide range of public and private actors to detect trafficking victims, or persons at risk, in camps hosting refugees and/or internally displaced persons, in reception centres for migrants and during asylum proceedings. I urge States to expedite the rescue of those held in captivity by terrorist groups, including women and children trafficked and/or held as sex slaves. I invite States to ensure that victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual violence or sexual exploitation perpetrated by terrorist groups are recognized as legitimate victims of terrorism and receive reparations. I also call upon States to train peacekeeping personnel on identifying and responding to indicators of conflict-related trafficking in persons, as a mandatory component of predeployment training. United Nations system entities have also become better equipped to address the challenges posed by trafficking in persons in conflict situations. I welcome in particular increased joint action and coordination among United Nations entities and note that coordinated responses allow for the efficient leveraging of institutional strengths and multiply the impact on the ground.

76. Combating trafficking in persons requires a comprehensive response, involving all States and stakeholders, not only those directly affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Such a response must include mutually reinforcing efforts to prevent and resolve armed conflicts, on the one hand, and to prevent and combat trafficking in persons on the other. As highlighted in the global compact on refugees, conflict is among the root causes of large refugee situations and contributes to increasing the risk of trafficking of individuals among vulnerable populations.

77. The Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the Organized Crime Convention remain the basis for a common understanding of trafficking in persons and provide a widely accepted legal framework for enhancing cooperation between States in this area. The almost universal ratification of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol is to be welcomed and I strongly encourage Member States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Protocol and its parent Convention. The effective and full implementation of international obligations remains at the core of the international response to human trafficking, and I urge Member States to redouble their efforts to criminalize all forms of trafficking in persons in their domestic legislation, provide adequate protection and assistance to trafficking victims, bring perpetrators to justice and strengthen international cooperation. I am confident that the recently established Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto will be instrumental in making progress towards fully implementing their provisions. I hereby invite States to consider making use of technical assistance and support made available by the United Nations system.

78. Victims of trafficking suffer traumatic experiences that add to those experienced in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Trafficking victims must receive adequate protection and assistance, notably to overcome their trauma and to facilitate their reintegration and rehabilitation. In that regard, their prompt identification is essential.

79. The collection of solid and reliable evidence during investigations is of paramount importance to ending the impunity of traffickers. I encourage Member States, whenever possible, to collect, preserve and store evidence, including electronic evidence, and to cooperate among themselves and with relevant international entities such as UNODC, to strengthen their capacities with regard to evidence collection, in full respect of international human rights law and standards.

80. Trafficking in persons is perceived by perpetrators, including armed groups and terrorists, as a high-profit and low-risk criminal activity; tracing illicit profits deriving from such activity contributes to diminishing this perception and reducing the

attractiveness of the crime. I welcome the efforts undertaken by international actors, such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Financial Action Task Force and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, to improve knowledge concerning illicit financial flows associated with human trafficking, including its linkages with terrorist financing. I invite Member States to pursue their efforts to strengthen compliance with international standards related to countering money-laundering and combating the financing of terrorism, conduct proactive investigations to track and disrupt criminal proceeds and financial flows associated with human trafficking and reinforce regional and international operational cooperation in this field. I also invite member States to provide to the relevant sanctions committees through the Monitoring Team and other relevant groups and panels of experts, as well as the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, all information they possess on individuals that may fulfil the listing criteria and on terrorist financing through trafficking in persons.

81. Trafficking in persons can amount to conflict-related sexual violence when committed in situations of conflict for the purpose of sexual violence or exploitation; as such, it is also addressed within the context of the women and peace and security agenda of the Security Council. I would therefore encourage States to design and implement results-oriented national action plans on women, peace and security which include comprehensive measures aimed at preventing and responding to trafficking in persons at the national level and allocate sufficient human and financial resources for the effective implementation of such action plans.

82. I welcome the expansion of membership in the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons to United Nations actors handling issues relating to human trafficking in conflict situations. I also note the advances the Group has made in facilitating the United Nations speaking with one voice on trafficking in persons, including through the provision of guidance for improved systemwide analysis and programming. I encourage Member States to support the secretariat functions of the Group and invite all members of the Group to build on these recent developments and continue to devote attention to the intersections between human trafficking and conflict.

83. Finally, I encourage them to use the thematic paper on countering trafficking in persons in conflict situations developed by UNODC in consultation with United Nations entities.